

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 30, Number 2

The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

June, 1995

We have a date

JUNE

■ **June 3** has been set for the jet boat tour, giving the historical side of the Rogue River, in conjunction with Hellgate Excursions. Brunch is included this year. A few spots remain.

■ Larry McLane's book signing (see page 6) is **June 9 at 6 p.m. and June 10 at 10 a.m.**

■ We can say it in one word: Pottsville. **June 17 and 18.** Any booth workers out there?

JULY

■ The annual Pie Social is again at the Wilderville Church. Pies are needed still. **July 16.**

AUGUST

■ As always, we'll have a booth at the Josephine County Fair to amuse and recruit. If you can work a shift, it's a great way to watch the people go by. **August 15-19.**

UPCOMING

■ Auction at the Schmidt House parking lot. We're already gathering good stuff. **Sept. 16.**

■ The annual meeting, with potluck and program is scheduled **Nov. 12.**

■ The GPHS Flea Market will include a society booth on **Dec. 9.**

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.

Profile

A founding member's history

By Lyle Felkner

Donley Barnes was one of the original members of the Josephine County Historical Society and twice its president. He now lives in the Illinois Valley, but was born in Grants Pass and spent most of his life here.

He grew up learning the jewelry and watch repair business from his father, who also was a pharmacist. They built the first greenhouse and florist shop as well. Years later, the Bert Barnes Jewelry store was sold to Tom Hart.

Don has said, "On Sundays, we played a lot of good music at our home, and for visiting dignitaries. I took violin lessons for eight years from a Mr. Applehart who came here from the New York Symphony. My mother played piano, Dad the cello, Joe Wharton played clarinet, R.W. Clark the flute and Sam Ellis the viola.

"I read about one book a night. My mother's sister was the librarian. The library was one room in the old city hall. In 1923, I graduated from Grants Pass High School, then I had one year at OAC (now Oregon State University). I made college money by working in the greenhouse."

Hank Houch and Don had a 23-foot drift boat and were in for a stint of



Don Barnes, former sheriff, looks over some artifacts while serving the society as an active member.

commercial fishing. They fished the Rogue River, the Coos River, the Sixes River and finally on the Columbia at Celilo Falls.

Before he was married, he spent summers as a guide at the Oregon Caves.

In the 1940s Don was our county sheriff. Paid \$125 a month, he had to furnish his own badge, gun and car. He

See Barnes page 2.

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Kerbyville to open despite county cuts

Under threat of permanent closure because of budget cuts, the Illinois Valley Historical Society and our society joined forces to make the commissioners and the parks department an offer to run the Kerbyville Museum at an early May meeting.

The commissioners have informally agreed to allow a combined effort of the Illinois Valley and Josephine County historical societies to manage and operate the museum in Kerby, effective July 1. The museum reopened May 15.

Under the proposal, an advisory board with members from both societies would manage the operations. Personnel and fiscal management would be the IV society's responsibility.

One component of the whole plan was that the Josephine County society would continue as a repository for documents, photos and research, while the museum would remain a place for three-dimensional artifacts. That would entail a "swap" of artifacts and documents in the future.

Barnes continued from page 1

made his badge out of a silver Mexican peso. His first day in office, there was a murder.

Some years later, when Loyd Lewis succeeded him as sheriff, he told the county commissioners that he had no car so it would be necessary for them to furnish a car for him or else pay taxi fares for all his calls. They furnished Loyd a car.

In the 1960s Don was the Josephine County Clerk for several terms, weathering many election years.

He came to know a great variety of interesting people, a few of whom were George Esterly, owner of the famed Waldo Mine, and author/adventurers Rudyard Kipling and Zane Grey.

As a youngster, he rode in the first car in this county and remembers well when the Ku Klux Klan was here.

Don's Irish heritage of a positive outlook and dynamic storytelling has never left him. When reporting Illinois Valley weather on radio station KAJO in recent years and noting they had much more rain in drought years than Grants Pass had, he would declare: "I live on the edge of Paradise."

Letters to the editor

Josephine County Historical Society:

It was my pleasure last week when a guest of Venita Pichell to attend a meeting of the local Questor group held at the Schmidt House. My father moved our family from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Grants Pass — four miles down Lower River Road — in 1914. It had been a number of years since my last visit so you can guess my surprise at the development as Venita drove me about the area.

I remember Anna and Flora and the large Schmidt Grocery, so it was interesting to see the home where the family had lived. Please accept the enclosed check to further your ambitious projects. Margaret Hammenbacher Martin

Josephine County Historical Society (Marilyn Luttrell):

The letter that you sent Senator Hatfield expressing your support of HB 2026 was recently forwarded to my office. I am pleased to tell you that this bill overwhelmingly passed the Oregon House in the middle of March and is currently in the Senate Transportation Committee.

Beverly Clarno
Speaker of the House
Editor's note: HB 2026 provides

money from Oregon Trail license plates for developing interpretive facilities for Oregon's four National Historic Trails, including the Applegate Trail.

Josephine County Historical Society (Rose Scott):

Thank you for taking the time to get in touch with me. I found your comments very interesting and welcome this opportunity to respond to your concerns.

As a longstanding supporter of the arts, I appreciate the great value of arts to society, both aesthetically and economically. I have voted in the past to support funding the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities [potential sources of revenue for the Schmidt House] and will continue to support these beneficial programs. In 1994, when the federal budget faced particularly difficult constraints, the NEA was forced to suffer cuts equivalent to those suffered by several other worthy programs. I appreciate, however, receiving your thoughtful comments on the value of arts funding. As Congress considers funding for the arts, I will certainly keep your comments in mind.

Senator Mark Hatfield

THE OLDTIMER

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508 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(503) 479-7827

Annual membership dues are \$15 and include a subscription.

Edith Decker — editor
Roger Ramsey — publishing committee chairman

The circulation of The Oldtimer is 600.

Mystery photo:

From the "unidentified" file, if you know the names of any of these proud 1919 champs, call Larry McLane, 479-2096.



In the community

■ **IS THERE AN ARTIST IN THE HOUSE?** Yup. Pat Bristol has been busy sketching sundry corners and objects in the Schmidt House this winter. "Project Awareness" is a year-long program sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. As part of that program, on April 25, an appreciative audience at the Hamilton House was treated to a unique approach to local history. Bristol, artist and member of the society, shared her talent and knowledge in a slide presentation, "An Artist's-Eye View of the Schmidt House." Look for her sketches on forthcoming society publications.

■ **THE PARADE PASSED THEM BY.** Because they were in the booth ... the society's booth at Merlin, that is. Ione and Bill Coleman, Ed and Ethyle Lester, Barbara Clausen and Lavendar O'Bluda held down the table at Merlin's biggest spring fling, the Merlin Parade held May 6.

■ **BRISTOL ATTENDS CONSORTIUM.** The society is a member of the Planned Giving Consortium, a group of non-profits who have combined forces to get their messages out and their people trained. The consortium

invited Kay Sprinkel Grace to speak on creating effective boards and staffs that work as a team. Tom Bristol attended the May 5, all-day workshop and will be reporting on the ideas he got there at the next board meeting.

■ **INTO THE WILDS AND BACK.** Larry McLane and Tom Atzel led a field trip to the Illinois Valley, including Waldo, the Cameron-Simmonds Mine and other major mining sites. The hike drew 50 people on April 23 who were interested in history and nature. The hike was a popular part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. The "People and the Land" event was primarily centered at the Merlin Armory April 20-23.

■ **NO ROOM AT THE WEASKU-INN.** Meet the "Mondays Make History" authors, an event held at the Weasku-Inn, was a big success as members of the community came by to listen to stories, thumb through books and generally chat throughout the afternoon. Tom Brooks gave us info. on future plans at the inn and Carl Johnson donated the use of the inn.



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History at the center

There's gold (and deer) in them thar hills

Collected by Larry McLane

A last round of anecdotes from the annals of the newspaper before summer:

From the Courier, Jan. 6, 1937

How to beat the depression with a gold pan is a lesson many sections of the country might learn from the Grave Creek district.

In an area 30 miles long by 10 miles wide, the recent depression was buried deep in the pits and diggings of dozens of pick-and-shovel or "pork and beans" miners. "Hard times" were washed away by the miners like the gravel in their pans.

Paul Moorehead, owner of the Grave Creek Grocery, has lived among those miners throughout the depression and he witnessed the pick and shovel keep more than 200

families off relief rolls.

In his store, Mr. Moorehead acted as agent for the miners — cashed their gold dust, staked them to grub and clothes, even advanced money from his own pocket, secured by the miners' willingness to "dig it out of the ground." He saw the depression licked.

When the decline set in, scores of families were thrown out of employment. Then it was either go on relief, drift from bread line to bread line in search for work, or make the good earth yield a part of its store of gold.

Of the estimated 200 miners there, about 100 came to the district from large cities and other districts where they had been on relief rolls and bread lines. At Grave Creek they were able to dig gold to provide themselves and

their families.

Moorehead noted that recently when WPA made an allocation for improving the Grave Creek road there was no one in the district available for the payroll. More recently a Grants Pass lodge asked for information as to needy families eligible to receive a Christmas basket. Moorehead made a survey and found none.

During the last several months larger interests have begun developing mines in the district and many of the men who formerly depended on their small workings for a livelihood have been given employment instead.

Since 1935, said Moorehead, the amount of gold brought to his store has dropped off at least 75 percent. That is due to the men being given employment by the larger producers.

continued on next page

We hope you'll support these businesses that help support the Josephine County Historical Society:

Ahlf House
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Rote Attorneys
Chet's Garden Center
Blaine R. Clark
Del Norte County Historical
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Cynthia Harelson, CPA
Illinois Valley Historical Society
John Hullman, DDS
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Josephine County Parks
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Oregon State Library
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History at the center

Continued from page 4.

"A great many people don't realize that the miner's gold brings new money into circulation, which is a thing no other enterprise can do," said Moorehead. "If I buy a bushel of wheat from a farmer and sell it to a mill, the transaction uses money already in circulation. But the miner's gold is new money and it reaches every businessman's cash drawer."



Not one, not two, but five deer's the limit, folks. But apparently that was still a problem as evidenced by this warning under the heading "Deer Law" in the July 11, 1901, Rogue River Courier:

The open season for deer commences July 15 and ends November 1. It is unlawful for any person to take, capture, kill or destroy

in any open season more than five deer.

Any person who shall lawfully kill five deer or less can make an affidavit before any justice of the peace to that effect and said justice shall thereupon deliver to applicant one leather tag (designed and issued by the State Game Warden) for the hide of each deer, not to exceed five in all.

One of these tags shall be securely fastened with wire to each deer skin and the owner is then entitled to offer such deer skin for sale or exchange or transportation to any point within the state.

The punishment for the violation of any of the provisions of the act is by a fine of no less than \$25, nor more than \$40 together with the costs of prosecution of said action or by imprisonment in the county jail for not less than 30 nor more than 120 days or

by both said fine and imprisonment.



And if you think the drive to the Cow Creek Center is too long, you should have been around before this meeting, noted in the Courier on July 25, 1901.

Council Proceedings: Uneventful session of our city parliament. Gambling to be stopped.

The city council held its regular meeting last Thursday evening, Mayor Kremer presiding. Councilmen Kykendall and Rebkopf and city attorney Maybee were absent.

The prevalence of gambling in the city and the wide open conduct of stud poker games, slot machines and other gambling devices, was brought before the council. On motion by Frier, the marshal was instructed to enforce the ordinance against gambling. Voting "yes" Frier, Hood, Williams, Jennings, Lewis. Voting "no" Smith.

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Interview

Stop the presses! McLane finally published

By Edith Decker

Ten years. One project. For most of us a decade is a long time to carry a torch — especially those of us who are procrastinators.

But Larry McLane has kept going — through thick books and thin microfilm — for about 10 years to finish his book on the history of the northern part of the county, his part of the county, beginning with its pioneer, Jimmie Twogood.

It began as a family history project and ended last month when the final versions came off the press, "First There Was Twogood," at about 450 pages. A lot of those pages are taken up by the 775 photos he culled from relatives, friends, other historical societies and complete strangers who happened to be descendants of people long dead whom McLane knew well.

"If they were from Seattle to Chico, I would go see 'em," McLane says of his sources. "Some of the more important pictures from Twogood's time, I got out of Ohio, Illinois, Montana and Washington state."

A descendant of the Harkness family provided photos McLane was especially tickled to have. In turn he provided the newest generations with a history they didn't know.

"I was able to supply these Harkness descendants with their complete legacy from 1852 to 1889 and pictures that they didn't even know existed."

Many of the photographs were taken by Peter Britt, as the one of Twogood on the cover, taken in 1857 when he was a strapping, solid community member at the age of 27.

"I had to cut 159 pages of photos out of this book. It would have been 600 pages and I just couldn't afford it," he says ruefully.

But there's good news. He plans on starting

his own small press, in part to publish historical books — books he's thought of doing since he started this huge project, little sidelights and other directions he wasn't able to go into in "Twogood."

He wants to put the photos he's collected on CD-ROM, a system of storing pictures on a computer disc. That way they'll be safe from harm.

But the photos aren't all there is to the book. Pictures without information are fairly useless as those of us who've gone through old photo albums without names can attest.

"I think the thing I'm really impressed with is that I was able to write about Jimmie Twogood and the feeling that when I got done researching and writing, that I really knew him," says McLane.

It's a sentiment he hopes will carry on to

his readers as well.

Twogood came early to the Grave Creek area. During the Indian Wars, his homestead was commandeered by the U.S. Army and turned from home into the much more regal sounding Fort Leland.

But it wasn't all bad. Twogood made a savvy businessman, supplying the army and other pioneers as well. He also did his turn at public service — a harder thing in those days before pay and when it might mean traveling far to get to the office.

"Here was a 25-year-old man who came to where they said was the most dangerous place for a white man to be and he survived it — not only survived it, he prospered," McLane says.

And what has made McLane survive these 10 years? Obviously, he has a great interest in the subject matter.

He started on a much smaller project —

⁶⁵ To put into perspective the hardships of these times in a new land one has to realize that (a) the Civil War was some seven years into the future; (b) General Custer's Battle of the Little Bighorn was some 22 years into the future; and (c) Grants Pass would not become a town for some 30 years. ⁹⁹

-excerpt from
Larry McLane's
"First There Was
Twogood"

Pen in hand

What: Book signing for "First There Was Twogood"

Who: Larry McLane

When: June 9, 6 to 9 p.m. & June 10, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: The Schmidt House Research Library

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Words from the bookshop

Hefty order comes in just in time for summer

By Nancy Surran

This month we are featuring some new books that have recently been ordered. Come in and browse the shelves for some summer reading material.

"The Botanist and Her Muleskinner: Lila Irvin Leach and John Roy Leach," by Golda Kirkpatrick, Charlene Holzwarth and Linda Mullens. A historical account of the botanical explorations of Lila and John Leach in southwestern Oregon in the 1920s and 1930s. Lila was one of Oregon's few pioneer botanists and this is her story.

She spent ten years searching the mountains of Josephine and Curry counties for scientific specimens, along on trips with her packer husband.

Her findings ultimately resulted in the designation of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area, the only federal wilderness named after a plant — one she discovered.

Her home and gardens in Portland,

where she retired, incidentally, are open to the public, run by the Friends of the Leach Botanical Garden.

"Captain Jack, Modoc Renegade," by Doris Palmer Payne. Chief of all the Modocs, Captain Jack was a man of strange contradictions. He was a champion of peace but entrenched his warriors in the volcanic wilds of the lava beds and defied the U.S. Army for six months.

He and 50 warriors fought the fierce Modoc War in 1872-3 in the bleak lava country of southern Oregon and northern California to prevent the organized drive of civilization and protect their homeland and culture.

"Levi Scott, Oregon Trailblazer," by Vira Cordano. One of the early arrivals to the Pacific Northwest, Levi Scott was an ordinary man who achieved extraordinary goals.

At the age of 47, he arrived in Oregon Territory. He headed the party that laid out the Scott-Applegate Trail in 1846 and led a group of immigrants into the Willamette Valley by the new southern route. He served in the

Cayuse War in 1848 and soon after founded the town of Scottsburg on the Umpqua River in Douglas County. He was a member of the Oregon Territorial Council and of the state's constitutional convention.

"Settling the Rogue Valley: The Tough Times, the Forgotten People," by Barbara Hegne. This book is not about the politicians, bankers, merchants and photographers, but rather the unknown miners, mothers, grandmothers, whiskey smugglers and others who contributed to the development of the Rogue Valley. It uncovers the prejudice, hard times and struggles of the lesser known, but equally important people.

"Women's Roots in Southern Oregon and Northern California," by Carol Barrett. This small book relates over 70 short stories of early women and matters of concern to these women living in the southern Oregon and northern California areas. It explores the tragedies, the pride, the shame, the joy, the fear that made up the lives of these unique women.

McLane continued from page 6

finding family photos — back in 1984 when his father passed away.

"I realized that we didn't really have any family pictures, not old ones anyway."

As he was digging, a friend and fellow history nut, Donna Pickett, began to convince him he should broaden his scope. How tough could it be? His family history is intermingled with the rest of the county's from beginning to end.

"If it hadn't been for Donna, I don't know if I really would have done it. I would have gotten some pictures together, but not like *this*."

Beginning with his own "great-greats" and so on, he began to comb through everything from court records to newspaper accounts.

"These people were all friends and carried on business and one thing or another. I just thought, 'What else can I find?'"

Well, he found out. He could find quite a lot. Sure things were missing, people were missing, but it surprised him how much there was to dig up.

"This was too important to stop with just *my* family," he eventually told himself.

The result, "First There Was

Twogood: A Pictorial History of Northern Josephine County," is now on the shelves.

He's donated a copy to the Josephine County Historical Society and the Oregon Room at the Main Branch of the county library.

It's also on sale at the society book store and elsewhere, for \$29.95, an extra \$5 for the xeroxed index.

After sinking about \$16,000 into the project, he doesn't ever expect to break even. But a rash of orders might get a second printing, or better yet, the funds needed to start that small press he wants to run for historical books.

In memorium

The society regrets to inform the membership that several members have passed away since the last newsletter:

❖
Charles A. Lundberg

❖
Dorothy Smith

❖
Edith Evelyn Voorhies

❖
Abby (Alderene) McLane

❖
Anita Kudlac
❖

Thanks

As a new part of The Oldtimer, we'd like to take space to thank the people who have donated time and items we need to keep the business of the society going:

■ A new floor is now down in one wing of the barn for better care of items we have in storage. Thanks to weekend carpenters Lou Pfeiler, Bob Lane, Charlie Reich, Tom Bristol, Francisco Lizarraga and some teens, Kevin Plunkett, David Day and Steven Chambless.

■ When we asked for an item to get us a little further into the 20th century, a FAX

machine, Ray Miller delivered one as fast as you can, well, dial a phone.

■ When the water heater in the Schmidt House went on the blink last month, Ed Dickenson brought it back from the blink.

■ Several volunteers who've been especially helpful were honored at a recent luncheon. Evelyn Davis, Mel Shaw, Adeline Sullivan, Duane Torvik and J.G. Wood were given special recognition. Their names were engraved on the Volunteer Recognition Plaque that hangs in the Schmidt House.

THE OLDTIMER NEWSLETTER

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